

FARMINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

POLICY AND PROCEDURE



Policy Number:
261-16

Effective Date:
04/09/2018

Subject:
Traffic Ancillary Services and Escorts

Approved by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S.D. Hebbe".

Steven D. Hebbe, Chief of Police



PURPOSE:

To establish a uniform procedure for traffic related ancillary services and the providing of police escorts and assistance during emergency and non-emergency situations.

POLICY:

It is the policy of the Farmington Police Department to provide for the delivery of traffic related ancillary services which have an effect on vehicular and pedestrian traffic in the city, including the providing of police escorts in situations deemed to have an excessive effect on vehicle and pedestrian traffic.

PROCEDURE:

Motorist Assists:

Officers will offer reasonable assistance to motorists who appear to be in need of aid. This may include providing information and directions when asked, transporting stranded motorist to the nearest convenient location where assistance may be obtained, or offering other assistance as needed.

Disabled vehicles on the roadway present a hazard to the stranded motorist and to other roadway users. Stranded motorists should not be left unattended when they appear to be exposed to hazardous situations. Due consideration should be given to factors that contribute to hazardous conditions such as the location, time of day, weather conditions, and the current priority of existing calls for police services.

The extent of the officer's assistance will depend on the level of distress of the stranded motorist. Officers may assist motorists by calling for the fire department to assist with fire, illness or injuries. They may transport a motorist to a safe location where the motorist may secure assistance. The officer may have dispatch contact a specific tow company requested by the motorist or arrange through dispatch for a private tow from the rotation list. Officers may also assist the motorist by calling a friend or taxi, pushing the vehicle from the roadway, or taking other necessary action.

Use of Push Bumpers:

Police vehicles equipped with push bumpers may be used to push from intersections or the travel portion of the highway any vehicles which are creating an immediate hazard to other traffic under, but not limited to, the following circumstances:

1. Assisting in moving a citizen's stalled vehicle to a place of safety.
2. Moving a vehicle out of a traffic lane to assist with the normal flow of traffic.
3. Moving vehicles in emergency situations. For example, to open a route for police, fire, EMT, or other emergency personnel.

Guidelines and Considerations:

Training in the use of push bumpers will be provided by a department driving instructor. Only vehicles with department approved and mounted push bumpers will be used to remove disabled motorists from the roadway.

If the vehicle is a hazard on the roadway and the owner and/or driver is not present, officers shall not push the unoccupied vehicle, except in cases of extreme circumstances where lives are immediately endangered. Absent life-endangering circumstances, the vehicle will be towed from the roadway per [Policy #261-17, Towing Services and Circumstances](#). Vehicles which have been damaged in an accident and would require special equipment to be removed from the roadway will not be pushed by a patrol vehicle. A tow truck will be utilized to remove the vehicle from the scene. The responding officer will follow department policy when towing vehicles, per [Policy #261-17, Towing Services and Circumstances](#).

Officers will use caution while pushing other vehicles. Bumping or sudden acceleration can cause air bag deployment. When pushing another vehicle, the speed of the patrol vehicle shall not exceed 10 miles per hour.

The driver of a disabled vehicle will be informed that damage may occur to his or her vehicle, including marks, scratches, or dents. The officer will have the owner and/or driver of the vehicle being pushed sign a release of liability waiver, releasing the City of any liability from any accidental damage caused during the push. When practical, this waiver should be explained and signed in full view of one of the officers recording devices (in car camera or body worn camera).

In the event a citizen does not wish to have his or her vehicle pushed from the roadway by a patrol vehicle, officers will refer to [Policy #261-17, Towing Services and Circumstances](#) with regards to towing vehicles. While waiting for the tow truck, the officer should place his patrol vehicle directly behind the disabled vehicle with the front wheels turned sharply toward the inside lanes of travel, and the emergency lights activated to allow other motorists to see the vehicles stopped in the roadway. The officer will escort all occupants of the disabled vehicle to a safe location, off of the roadway, to ensure the safety of everyone involved. Officers should also wear their reflective traffic vests for maximum visibility while standing along the roadway for prolonged periods of time.

Prior to pushing any vehicle, the officer will take into consideration the size, type, and weight of the vehicle being pushed. Absent a life or death emergency, officers should not push vehicles which are significantly larger or which significantly outweigh the patrol vehicle.

The officer will inspect the citizen's vehicle for damage prior to pushing it from the roadway.

The officer will discuss with the driver such things as the intended destination to which the disabled vehicle is to be pushed and the steering and braking of the vehicle to be pushed. The officer should advise the driver to place the vehicle in neutral with the park brake off and the key turned to the "on" position so as to not lock up the steering wheel.

The officer will position the patrol vehicle directly behind the vehicle to be pushed, checking that the height of the push bumper and the bumper of the citizen's vehicle match. The officer will survey the surrounding area to avoid bumps, dips, holes, etc.

The officer will utilize the patrol vehicle's emergency lights to warn other motorists.

The vehicle will be pushed only the distance necessary to remove the vehicle from being a hazard. The officer will push the vehicle only in as straight a path as possible, since the likelihood of causing damage to the police vehicle or the disabled vehicle is greatly increased if the two remain in direct contact while negotiating a turn. If a turn is required to safely remove the vehicle from the hazardous location, the police vehicle must disengage from direct contact prior to the pushed vehicle's commencement of the turning action. This can be accomplished by attaining sufficient speed and releasing the vehicle prior to the turn. If necessary, the police vehicle may re-engage the vehicle for additional pushing only after the pushed vehicle has completed the turn and it has come to a complete stop. In order to avoid the increased likelihood of damages, officers should avoid re-contacting a vehicle while it is still in motion.

After successfully pushing the vehicle from the roadway, the officer will inspect the vehicle for any damage caused by the use of the push bumpers. Should accidental damage occur during the pushing of the stalled vehicle, the officer shall immediately notify the shift supervisor.

The officer shall also ensure the damage is recorded through photos or video. The officer will provide the driver with a business card, which includes the officer's name, R-number, and the incident number. The officer will complete a memo to his supervisor detailing the incident before the conclusion of his or her workday.

Push bumpers will not be used to push a disabled vehicle to a repair facility, initiate a restart of the engine, or for other similar purposes.

The use of push bumpers should not be viewed as an option of "last resort"; however, officers should consider the use of tow companies and other options before using push bumpers.

Due to the inherent risk of injury from pushing a vehicle manually, officers will only push a vehicle by hand if there are no other options available and the danger is so great, action must be taken immediately.

Emergency Assistance to Motorists:

Officers should follow the following procedures for specific emergency situations:

Vehicle Fires:

1. Immediately advise dispatch of the location of the fire and the type of vehicle involved;
2. Use available fire extinguisher when practical and safe to do so;
3. Protect and isolate the fire scene until Fire Department personnel arrive.

Medical Emergencies:

1. Upon the discovery of a medical emergency, officers shall provide dispatch with information concerning the type of emergency, location, apparent condition of the victim(s) and other pertinent information;
2. After notifying the dispatcher of the nature of the emergency, officers render first aid when appropriate until assistance has arrived.

Medical Emergency Escorts:

Officers who encounter medical emergencies are expected to provide reasonable assistance within their capabilities to preserve life or protect property. Officers should summon medical assistance to the scene of medical emergencies. Under no circumstances will officers provide an emergency escort for civilian vehicles to any medical facility.

Police Escorts:

Police escorts will not be provided for any organization without authorization by the Chief of Police or designee. These types of escorts include:

1. Oversize vehicles;
2. Vehicles with hazardous or unusual cargo;
3. Funerals;
4. Any other special events.

The requesting organization shall provide the following information to the Chief of Police or designee:

1. Anticipated route;
2. Number and types of vehicles;

3. Anticipated duration of the escort;
4. Special problems due to the nature of the escort.

The escort of public officials and dignitaries or other escorts related to special events shall be governed by those specific Department policies.

Hazardous Highway Conditions:

During normal patrol activities officers must remain alert for unsafe or hazardous conditions on the roadways. When an officer observes a roadway hazard that can be easily corrected, the officer should initiate the appropriate corrective action to remove the hazard.

Officers should notify the Communications Center if a hazard is identified. The Communications Center will contact the proper authorities to correct the problem. When appropriate, an officer should protect the scene and any bystanders, and direct traffic or employ whatever means are necessary until the situation is corrected. Hazardous roadway conditions that may be encountered by officers include:

1. Debris on the roadway;
2. Defects in the roadway itself;
3. Lack of, or defects in, highway safety features;
4. Lack of, improper, visually obstructed, damaged, or non- working mechanical traffic control devices or informational signs;
5. Lack of, or defective, roadway lighting systems;
6. Other roadway hazards.

Hazardous Materials:

Refer to Department policy number 95-33 for procedures applicable to hazardous materials.

Abandoned Vehicle Procedures:

Farmington City Ordinance Section 25 Article 6 defines the circumstances under which vehicles are considered abandoned and when and how they are to be removed.

The officer will make every reasonable attempt to contact the registered owner prior to removal. After a registration check of the vehicle is conducted, an attempt should be made to contact the owner by telephone or in person, if practical.